The application has been carefully reviewed in light of the final Office Action dated October 16, 2008. Claims 1, 4, 5, 7 and 9 to 11 are in the application, with Claims 1, 7 and 9 being independent. Claim 6 has been cancelled, Claims 10 and 11 have been newly-added, and Claims 1, 4 and 5, 7 and 9 have been amended. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, Claims 1, 4 to 7 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,057,933 (Hudson) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,751,310 (Yano). Claim 6 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter and without conceding the correctness of its rejection. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of the remaining claims are respectfully requested.

Independent Claim 1 as amended generally concerns an image processing method. The method includes the steps of inputting image data representing an image, the image data having n color components, and generating input data by adding color difference data to the image data. The method further includes the step of deciding output data having output color components for an output device and output density data, by referring to an n-dimensional table in which a correspondence between the input data and the output data and the output density data is stored, based upon the input data, wherein output density data represents a density of an output image reproduced by the output device based upon the output data. In addition, the method includes the steps of calculating the color difference data by subtracting the output density data from the input data, and outputting the output data having output color components decided in the deciding step. The output color components include a cyan component and a magenta component. The

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output data included in the n-dimensional table is decided such that the cyan component and the magenta component are not simultaneously output by the output device in an area where a density of the cyan component and a density of the magenta component are low, and is decided so as to minimize the difference between the input data and the output density data in other areas.

Thus, among its many features, Claim 1 provides that (i) output data is decided having output color components for an output device and output density data, by referring to an n-dimensional table in which a correspondence between the input data and the output data and the output density data is stored, based upon the input data, wherein the output density data represents a density of an output image reproduced by the output device based upon the output data, (ii) the output color components include a cyan component and a magenta component, and (iii) the output data included in the n-dimensional table is decided such that the cyan component and the magenta component are not simultaneously output by the output device in an area where a density of the cyan component and a density of the magenta component are low, and is decided so as to minimize the difference between the input data and the output density data in other areas.

For example, Figures 9, 11 and 20 of the specification, together with their corresponding descriptions, describe example aspects of the disclosure. These figures are seen to illustrate use of an n-dimensional table in which a correspondence between the input data and the output data and the output density data is stored. Of course, it should be noted that Figures 9, 11 and 20 describe example aspects of the disclosure, and Claim 1 is not limited as such.

Turning to the applied references, Hudson and Yano are not seen to disclose or suggest at least foregoing features (i) to (iii).

As understood by Applicant, Hudson discloses quantized processing using a table for converting input data having one color component to output data having one color component. See Hudson, Abstract; and column 3, line 66 to column 4, line 21. Further, Hudson is seen to disclose that cyan and magenta are controlled using conditional judgment after the input data is converted using a table. See Hudson, Figure 6.

As such, Hudson is seen to disclose that each color component is processed. However, Hudson is not seen to disclose or suggest use of an n-dimensional table, or that output data is decided in other areas.

Accordingly, Hudson is not seen to disclose or suggest that (i) output data is decided having output color components for an output device and output density data, by referring to an n-dimensional table in which a correspondence between the input data and the output data and the output density data is stored, based upon the input data, wherein the output density data represents a density of an output image reproduced by the output device based upon the output data, (ii) the output color components include a cyan component and a magenta component, and (iii) the output data included in the n-dimensional table is decided such that the cyan component and the magenta component are not simultaneously output by the output device in an area where a density of the cyan component and a density of the magenta component are low, and is decided so as to minimize the difference between the input data and the output density data in other areas.

In addition, Yano has been reviewed and is not seen to compensate for the deficiencies of Hudson. In particular, Yano is seen to disclose that in image recording by

discharging plural inks of different characteristics onto a recording medium, recording pixels to be recorded by at least one of the inks of either yellow, magenta or cyan color subjected to pixel expansion are expanded in four directions. A logic product is then calculated between the expanded pixels and the pixels to be recorded with an ink which is black not subjected to pixel expansion, and the recording pixels to be recorded by the ink which is black not subjected to pixel expansion are replaced by the pixels formed by the inks (Y, M, C) subjected to pixel expansion. See Yano, Abstract.

However, Yano is not seen to disclose or suggest use of an n-dimensional table. Moreover, Yano is not seen to disclose or suggest that output data is decided in two areas, namely, an area where a density of cyan component and a density of magenta component is low, and other areas. Accordingly, Yano is not seen to disclose or suggest foregoing features (i) to (iii).

Claim 1 is therefore believed to be allowable over the applied references.

In addition, independent Claims 7 and 9 are apparatus and computer-readable recording medium claims generally corresponding to method Claim 1, and are believed to be allowable for the same reasons.

The other claims in the application are each dependent from the independent claims and are believed to be allowable over the applied references for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

No other matters being raised, it is believed that the entire application is fully in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

No fees are believed due; however, should it be determined that additional fees are required, the Director is hereby authorized to charge such fees to Deposit Account 06-1205.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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